

Minutes of the East Montpelier Planning Commission - Final

February 15, 2024

PC Members Present: Zach Sullivan (Chair), Mark Lane, Erica Zimmerman, Clarice Cutler, Maia Stone, Nik Khosla, Richard Hall, Kim Watson (zoom), Gianna Petito (zoom)

PC Members Absent:

Call to Order: 7:03 PM

Changes to Agenda: None

Public Comment: None.

Review Minutes

The group reviewed the February 1, 2024 minutes.

Motion: To approve the February 1, 2024, minutes as amended. Made by Mark Lane, second by Erica Zimmerman. Passed unanimously.

Recognition of departing PC members

Zach Sullivan recognized Richard Hall, Maia Stone, Mark Lane and Gianna Petito for their service. Erica Zimmerman thanked Gianna Petito and others for their comments and service. Several PC members gave kudos and appreciation to all departing PC members.

As a result of the departing members, after the March election, the PC will discuss the size of the PC further and whether we will need to downsize the PC to seven members which led to the next agenda item.

For membership clarity Kim Watson requested the following from Zach Sullivan after the meeting. Mark Lane, Richard Hall, and Gianna Petito are not running for re-election, and Maia Stone is stepping down after the March election. We do have the following EM citizens running for membership on the PC, Ben McCall (Energy Committee) is running for one of the 3 year seats, and Zoe Christiansen is running for the 2 year seat (the remainder of Maia Stone's term). Again, we discussed encouraging PC members to network with citizens to do write-ins for PC membership.

Discuss proposed amendment to PC Rules of Procedure

Potential action item: Amend Rules of Procedure

Zach Sullivan proposed a change to the rules of procedure, and he noted that he was looking in the wrong place for the legal citations and have since been informed that the open meeting law defines a quorum as including the vacant seats in the count, so that issue is not something that we can deal with through our rules of procedure. Zach asked the ZA Engert about looking into what it would take to simply change the size of the PC if that was something that we want to do, and she's going to help with that research. Zach Sullivan discussed that nine people is a lot, and we discussed at the meeting it may be hard to fill the seats. Kim Watson thought that the SB could vote to reduce the size. She stated that it does take a charter change to go from elected to

appointed but thought that the size change could be done by the SB. Gianna Petito reviewed the By-Law and State Statute and noted that to change the PC membership we may have to put it to a town vote. We will continue to research this and discuss further after Town Meeting Day elections.

Discuss town survey for town plan work

Erica Zimmerman presented her work on the draft survey and stated the goal tonight is to get the content set on the survey for presenting at the town meeting. She asked that we ignore formatting issues in the hardcopy of the survey we received since it lost format going from google docs to word/pdf. She asks that the members focus primarily on the content and to some extent on the wording of the questions. She, also, noted that the last page (or so) of the draft is an outline of the 2011 survey with some notes/questions to direct our survey. While reviewing the 2011 topics it was interesting to see the topics of interest and comparing them to our (2024) topics. Back then they were looking at things like technology, open land, recreation, and the importance of farming. Erica Zimmerman noted that Gianna Petito's comment on her internet service upgrade due to CV fiber does not make technology such a hot topic for the 2024 survey. We want to ask questions on topics that are relevant to us and what we want to work on.

Erica Zimmerman, also, discussed her revision work on Chapter 2 of the Town Plan with Maia Stone. They noticed a question that they felt belonged in the survey. As a result of looking at this chapter wondered if other chapters may prompt questions that could be in the survey and ask the PC members to look at their chapters for any questions.

Erica Zimmerman wants a balance of open-ended questions, some priorities and questions about zoning and some short questions on the topics that we brainstorm. Two areas that are parallel with the 2011 survey are the open-ended questions and the zoning topics. Erica Zimmerman did a walkthrough of the draft survey to the commission, Part A, Open-Ended, Part B, How concerned, Part C Assets, issues and goals, Part D Housing and Development, Part E Town policy/planning and their priority. After review members gave comments on Part A, asking for the 2nd version of questions 3 and 4. They discussed rewording of question 2, too to help the reader.

The PC members thanked Erica Zimmerman for doing an excellent job on the draft survey and after PC members' extensive discussions on the remaining Parts of the survey. We moved Parts around and reworded various sections and topics. After our review and discussion, the PC provided Erica Zimmerman with a path forward for edits and a 2nd draft to be presented at the next meeting. We discussed that we do not expect the survey to be completed by Town Meeting and will continue to work on a final draft. It was asked if PC members had other suggested edits that they submit to Erica Zimmerman, and she will review all suggested changes for the next draft.

Updates

- **Capital Improvement Committee** – No new updates.
- **Energy Committee** – Talk to Ben, Information out of the CVRPC. Will be looking for the land use section and energy use
- **Resilient Roads Committee** – SB looking at Grant and moving forward.
- **Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission** – Rescheduled CVRPC meeting
Clarice Cutler has been asking CVRPC about housing. Workshop on March 14th 9-12
“Homes for All: A ‘Design & Do’ Toolkit for Small-scale Home Builders, Investors & Community Leaders The Homes for All Toolkit is Launching Soon! Join the VT Department of Housing & Community Development and statewide partners for the Homes for All Toolkit Launch and Trainer Summit on March 14 in Barre!

ZA/DRB Report

2 permits (curb cut, Power Line). No ZA/DRB report

Other Business

None

Motion: To adjourn. Made by Mark Lane, second by Clarice Cutler. Passed unanimously.

The meeting closed at 8:48 PM

Respectfully submitted by Kim Watson

Approved on: March 7, 2024